

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 17, 1880.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. CAMERON, of Pennsylvania, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 918.]

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 918) for the relief of certain volunteer officers of the Navy, have had the same under consideration, and beg leave to submit the following report:

With a view of obtaining all the information possible relating to this bill, your committee addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, requesting an expression of opinion from him as to the advisability of its passage, and received the following reply, dated March 12, 1880:

I have the honor to return herewith Senate bill 918, for the relief of certain volunteer officers who were mustered out of the Navy under the act of February 15, 1879, upon which you desire my opinion.

In a communication to the naval committees of Congress, dated February 17, 1879, I recommended the passage of a supplementary act, allowing the officers who were mustered out a year's sea-pay; and I therefore recommend the passage of Senate bill 918, which proposes to give them the difference between waiting-orders pay, which they received, and sea-pay.

One acting passed assistant surgeon, fourteen acting assistant surgeons, and one acting ensign were mustered out.

It will require about ten thousand dollars to pay them the difference between waiting-orders and sea pay, and I would suggest that the bill be amended by adding "and the necessary amount to pay the same is hereby appropriated out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated."

The act of February 15, 1879, to abolish the volunteer navy of the United States, provides as follows:

And in the cases of officers who may not be found to be either professionally, morally, or physically qualified to discharge the duties of their position, then said officers shall be mustered out of the service of the government, within six months from the passage of this act, with one year's pay.

From the letter of the Secretary of the Navy, above quoted, it appears that immediately after the act of February 15, 1879, which mustered out certain volunteer officers of the Navy, the Secretary of the Navy recommended to Congress the passage of a supplemental act allowing those officers a year's sea-pay; and for the same reasons then given he now recommends the passage of this act with an amendment, which is adopted by the committee.

It seems that it has heretofore been the custom of Congress, when mustering out of the service officers either of the Army or the Navy, to allow them one year's full pay. Waiting-orders pay is not full pay, but is one of four grades of pay in the Navy—shore, waiting, furlough, and sea pay.

2 RELIEF OF CERTAIN VOLUNTEER OFFICERS OF THE NAVY.

Your committee deem it no more than an act of justice to these officers, who served the government long and faithfully, and who were thrown out of employment by no act of their own, that they should be paid the highest grade of pay to which they, in their respective ranks, are entitled. Your committee, therefore, recommend the passage of the bill, with the amendment recommended by the Secretary of the Navy.